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MAMMON-WORSHIP.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BALTIMORE,

ON THE MORNING OF

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY,

JANUARY 13TH, 1850.

BY

WILLIAM ROLLINSON WHITTINGHAM,

BISHOP OF MARYLAND.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF A COMMITTEE OF THE CONGREGATION APPOINTED TO COLLECT SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF THE CHURCH DEBT.

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A SERMON, &c.

Isaiah, xliv. 20.

HE FEEDETH ON ASHES.

Of some diseases, and those not the least dangerous, it is a distinguishing characteristic, that the ailing fancy themselves in health, and resent, as rudeness and unkindness, an attempt to undeceive them.

This is especially observable in the worst family of diseases to which our compound frame is liable, — those that affect the mind. It is proverbial, that insanity cannot know itself, and sees nothing but insanity in the pity and wise counsel that would direct and help it to a cure.

While the delusion reigns, its effect is pleasant. Its victim finds real ease and comfort, so long as it lasts, in the falsehood of which he is the dupe. The consumptive patient travels steadily to the grave, flattered every day with the belief that he has made progress toward recovery, and as much consoled by the deceitful imagination as he could be by a real improvement. The madman reigns over the kingdom in his cell with more of the zest of gratified ambition and satiated thirst for

power, than the carking anxieties attendant on a crown ever allow its real possessor.

We do not deny the reality of the benefit conferred by the delusion, *such as it is.* While it lasts, the hope of the dying victim of consumption is pleasant, and the enjoyment of the madman in his fancied kingdom hearty. But do we think their fancies for that reason any the less false infatuations? Does the smile that plays on the thin lips, as they assure us of returning health, seem any the less pitiable, when we think of the brief period within which they must stiffen in the grave, because we know it to be an honest index of the hope within? Does the madman's stately air and elevated tone lessen the commiseration awakened by the contemplation of a man — a being bearing his MAKER's image — to whom a straw can suffice for a sceptre, and a joint-stool for a throne?

Yet how difficult to undeceive the willing subjects of such monstrous, but agreeable deceptions! How hard to deprive them of their cherished hopes! their *real* enjoyment of their false possessions! How thankless the task, of struggling with them to get at, and lift, the veil which hides from them their true condition, and take away the colored film through which they see health in the symptoms of decay, or dignity in the humiliating concomitants of restraint!

In the cases named, there may be thought to be no sufficient motive for undertaking a task so hard and thankless. The life undermined by disease can not be prolonged by the knowledge that it is fast approaching

its fixed period. The delusions of insanity may as well prevail as not, if the mind itself be not recovered from its ruin.

But our nature suffers under worse disease than the ailments of the body, and is liable to an insanity that affects the soul in a higher class of functions than those of the mere intellect. There is a consumption of the heart — its affections and desires — worse than that of the organs of respiration. There is a madness which affects, not the capacities for ordinary business and enjoyment, but those for fellowship with God and preparation for eternity.

The delusions of fancied health and false enjoyment are inseparable attendants of the hereditary spiritual malady which infects us all. In its origin it was fastened on our nature by the successful malice of the being who is the father of lies; and he is careful to maintain its prevalence by constant recourse, in the case of every child of Adam, to the deception which seduced our father to his ruin. Him he tempted by persuading to the harmless use of God's good gifts, and appealing to the evidence of sense, that the forbidden fruit was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise. To us he repeats the same temptation; but, availing himself of the advantage gained by the primal sin, with the addition of the delusion, when we are succumbing to his artifice, that still all is going well, and we are in a state of safety, and fulfilling the ends of our creation and reaping the advantages God made us to enjoy.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of devil," says the word of God. We are celebrating the feast of the Saviour's Manifestation, of which this day is the octave in the Church's year. We may fitly turn our thoughts to that portion of the purpose of His manifestation which consisted in dethroning the devil, as the god of this world, from the hearts of those who become partakers of the liberty wherewith He came to make His followers free.

It is by holding men in bondage to this present life — by making them servants of their animal and merely intellectual nature only — that Satan exercises that sway in this fair world of God's creation, that entitles him to be designated in the word of truth as "*its god.*" It is by giving men the power to escape the bondage of mortality, by opening their eyes to see the worthier ends of their existence, above and beyond the objects which now surround them and would engross their affections and desires, by calling them to a pursuit of those higher and nobler ends of being, by offering them the pledges and means of securing eternal life in this mortal state, by teaching them to make earthly things subservient to the attainment of heavenly blessings, — that the Son of God destroys the devil's work in man's delusion.

Serving this life and *serving* God, — are, truly and really, the distinctions that divide mankind, as candidates for eternal life. Some serve this life, after notions of their own, with very little of its enjoyments, and perhaps even in contented deprivation of much of its possessions. Some serve it, in a miserable slavery to opin-

ion — some to custom — some to circumstance — some to constitution and temperament — some, to false, low, insufficient, superficial views of duty. But they are all serving *this life*, its pursuits, rewards, gains, obligations, principles and aims, and *them only*. To rise above them, and put them down to their true place as mere means and opportunities, and instruments of *serving* God, is the vocation of Christ's freemen. The manhood of the Eternal Son of God was taken on Him, that our nature might be capable of such triumph over the circumstances of its condition; and in Him, we obtain the power to live *in* time, but *for* eternity — to *use* the world and all that is in it, not *serve* it — to "reign as kings," whether rich or poor, whether low or exalted, whether in prosperity or misery, by the exercise of a will set free by the love of God, through faith in Him, to *do His will* in all things, and see His will over all, and in every thing find the end of desire and enjoyment only in the accomplishment of that blessed and holy will which is our life.

Thus *faith* in God (as He reveals Himself in Christ) becomes the line that divides the heirs of eternal life from the servants of that which now is, and victims of the delusions of the devil. The one question on which our eternity depends, is, whether we *believe in* God, or in *the world* and the being who is using it as his snare to take captive the willing victims of his lies?

If we believe in God, we hear and obey the teaching of His Son — teaching conveyed to us expressly in His doctrine, and most impressively in His life on earth among us.

If we believe in the world, we trust it, lay out our desires and affections on it, are satisfied with it, live for it, worship it.

"What, worship it?" you cry — "who worships the world?"

You do, my brethren, many of you — many now within the sound of my voice. We have heard this morning the Divine description of idol-worship; "He saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God: — he feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"* "A deceived heart" is the root and essential condition of idolatry — a heart turned away from God — from His holy will and promises, in some other direction. It matters not what the direction is; that is but the circumstance of the sin; its essence is, in the estrangement of *the heart* from God. The heart set on something else than God, has an idol. Its idol is, it must be, ashes: for God alone is true, and good and beautiful. The creature that is taken in His place is a false invention, a mocking counterfeit: it is a mouthful of ashes to the hungry, bitterness and corrosion to the mouth that is seeking sweetness.

That is taken in the place of God, in which our trust is put, to which our heart says, Deliver me, of which our practice shows, that it is our joy and stay. Vast is the variety of immediate preferences, by which, in subser-

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* Isaiah xliv. 17, 20. First Lesson. First Sunday after Epiphany.

vience to their almost infinitely diversified temperaments of animal and intellectual constitution, men are turned aside to fill their right hand with a lie. But the difference is of degree and direction, not of kind. The self-approved moral man may be filling his hand with as mere delusion as the poor dupe of sensual pleasure; and the greedy gatherer of ill gotten gains be worshipping as base an idol as the wretch who lets his passions loose against society. In their relations to human society, to the concerns of this present life, to their fellow beings while on their passage to the grave, the murderer and the fraudulent bankrupt, the libertine and the niggard, must be looked upon as occupying very distinct positions: but in their relations to the God who made and is to judge them, to the Saviour who redeemed them, they stand on the same level. They have one and all put Him aside. They have bestowed their hearts elsewhere. The murderer serves his passions, the libertine his lusts, the cheat and miser their love of wealth: but they are all alike in bondage. They have forsaken God for another master: for him who uses the flesh and its lusts, the world and its allurements, as his instruments to ensnare his captives, and delude them with the belief that their slavery is freedom, their misery enjoyment.

This bondage to Satan in serving the world, assumes a distinct, positive form, in the dispositions which we form and cherish with regard to *money*, and the use we make of it.

Money is the representative of the wealth and enjoyment of this life. Food, raiment, shelter from the inclemency and changes of the weather, sensual gratifications, cultivation of the intellect, refinement, taste, the luxury of having, and the luxury of giving, the sense of independence and the consciousness of power, influence, respectability, even immunity in crime, are all more or less directly, and more or less completely, but really and undeniably, within the power of *money*. Get money and you get the world and all that it can give. Even character — not false character, the flatterer's lie with tongue in cheek, and the needy parasite's loathsome praise, but true character, the result of freedom from temptation, of opportunity and ability to indulge kindly dispositions, of independence of position enabling a man to be honest, truthful and consistent without much trouble — even character is within the magic power of money.

Money, then, is the world, to most of us. It is the outward and visible, the real and tangible *idol* which the invisible god of this world makes his deluded bond-slaves worship. "Get money," he whispers to them, "and you get ease, enjoyment, comfort, respectability, influence, happiness. Have you got it? keep it, for it may easily slip away, and who knows what shall then become of you? Put your trust in money. That will ensure you wherewith to live and to enjoy life. You may want food and friends and opportunity of doing good, if you have no money. Without it, you never can. Get money. Keep it. Hoard it. Let your hearts rejoice as it gath-

ers in your coffers, and swells out your plump bags, and jingles in your purses. With money you are safe: with money you may be useful."

Thus he feedeth you on ashes, and turns aside the deceived heart, to make gold its god, and say to it, Deliver me, for in thee do I put my trust!

But from this delusion of the devil, CHRIST came to set us free. By precept and example, He contradicted and exposed it. One of the most prominent features of our SAVIOUR'S teaching is, warning against dependence upon wealth and worldly possessions; denunciation of devotion to them as hateful in the sight of GOD and ruinous to the soul; inculcation, by positive teaching, by His own constant practice, and by direct and specific praise of instances in others, of what we call *sacrifices* of money, goods or opportunities of gain.

A man asked Him, to speak for him to his brother, that he might have his share of their joint inheritance. Surely, a reasonable request! a laudable recognition of the power and authority of the LORD! a modest wish for its exertion, to an honest end! But how was it regarded by Him who measureth out the earth to its inhabitants, and claims His right in the beasts of the forest and the cattle of a thousand hills, and says that the gold and the silver are His own? He loathed and spurned the office of a judge or divider of worldly goods: and seizing the opportunity He turned to His disciples, to wean them from the idolatry in which He had been asked to become an accomplice, "and He said unto

them, *Beware of covetousness.*" Why? because it is unlawful desire of another's? No! but in itself, as the desire of lawful, honest gain, of possession polluted by no contamination in its acquisition. "Beware of covetousness; *for a man's life consisteth not in the things which he possesseth.*" And He went on to speak a parable unto them, of the rich fool who tilled his ground honestly, and filled his barns thriftily, and pleased himself in the snug thought of his comfortable independence, till the voice came—an apoplexy, perhaps, or a palsy of the heart—and required his soul, and in terrible irony asked him, whose the things should be, which he had provided? Is there no Nathan here, to go round this congregation and say to each whom it concerns, Thou art the man? Yes: God's angel will. His Spirit does. O my brother, stop not the ear to its still, small voice! it may save thee an eternity of unavailing sorrows!

But was that the only solemn warning on this subject, given us by the Son of God? If it were, it were enough—enough to tingle in the ears of those who have wealth, and to chill the hearts of those who know how they are longing and striving for it. But you know how far, how very far that lesson, plain and unmistakeable as it is, is from being our Saviour's only admonition to beware of him who is feeding us on ashes! Who has not read, and wondered at the beauty, and still more marvelled at the force, (little as we may have regarded and obeyed it) of the sermon about serving God and Mammon? The two masters are brought plainly out. Their

two services are distinguished and contrasted. There is such a thing as devil-worship — for the devil is the opponent, the antagonist, the enemy of God's love to man. And that worship of the devil consists in serving Mammon. Who does not expect to hear next of some vile, or dread abomination? But that which our Lord contrasts with the service of God, as *darkness* with the *light*, is *taking thought* — bestowing anxious care — giving ourselves anxiety, of desire, or forecast, or apprehension, — *for our life*, about food or raiment. Dependence for that upon any thing beneath God's care and foresight, and wisely providing love, is declared to be choosing another master — hating Him in whom we live and move and have our being, in comparison of the things by which that being is to be sustained, and in which it is enjoyed. When God comes among us, and teaches us how to use His gifts, He denounces as Mammon's service — He specifies, — not the madness of the brainsick hoarder, who is accumulating thousands upon tens of thousands in yearly narrowed outlays from yearly swelling incomes; but the mere anxiety of one *who seeks but for food* and *raiment*. To say to these, Deliver me; to fix the heart's desires and cares on these; to trust for them to cares, or toils, or money and money's worth; is to bestow on them what God reserves unto Himself — to make them deceivers of the heart, to feed on the bitterness of their ashes, and bow down, in them, to the god of this world's worship.

It was in exact accordance with this teaching, that when He saw a certain poor widow cast in, of her penury, all the living that she had unto the offerings of God, He called the attention of His disciples to her deed, and pointed that out to their admiration, as more, in His sight, than the rich were doing while they cast in large gifts of their abundance. Would He have so distinguished it, but to praise it? Would He have praised it, if not in itself the proper course? That widow believed in God, and believed not in the world. She trusted God for supply of her deep poverty; and she trusted not in uncertain riches. Her works displayed her faith: and our faith, my brethren, shows itself in the convulsive grasp with which we clutch the money, be it much or little, that the father of lies is persuading us to make our god.

In another way the faith of an earnest and honest heart, in choosing between God and Mammon, displayed itself in the use of the "very costly" ointment, made by Mary at the feast in Bethany. That deed received the very peculiar mark of approbation, in which it stands alone, to have our Saviour's own assurance that it should form an inseparable portion of His history; be told, and wondered at, and copied by the few who have spiritual understanding to receive the lesson, and strength of faith to use it, wherever the gospel shall be preached through all the earth and throughout all time; and that just because of what the world would call its *recklessness*, what Judas, (the traitor, in whose heart Satan entered, first

to make him covetous, then a thief, and then a betrayer and murderer of the LORD of glory) *did* call its prodigal unthriftness. Mary *believed* in Him on whose head she poured the ointment. Her heart rested in Him. She cared for nothing, longed for nothing but His glory. She saw blessedness in advancing that, even by so small a thing as the lavishing on His use a costly ointment. Faith like hers can see no other use in riches, desire no other gratification from their possession, than their employment in the service of the LORD, in whose blood it sees its ransom, in whose glory it finds its exceeding great reward.

These facts, my brethren, I have a reason for bringing before you at this time. Beside that we are now just closing the season of gifts and of reckoning up of gains; beside that we have been meditating on the visit to CHRIST at Bethlehem by those who brought gold and frankincense and myrrh as gifts to Him in pledge and earnest of the homage of the Gentiles — *of us*, whose representatives they were, *for whom* they pledged a willing service of the best and all we have, in proportion as we share their faith; beside these circumstances of the season, there is at this juncture a call to remind you of the necessity of guarding against him who would gladly make you feed on ashes, in making riches your dependence, and withholding when it is a time to give, or sparing when there is opportunity of doing good.

I have heard, for weeks past, of an effort now making to relieve this church from the burden of a heavy debt.

I have been myself, in some sort, a party in an attempt to provide for the erection of another house of God for our fast increasing population. To accomplish both these works, gifts in money to an amount which our way of dealing with things sacred would make us consider large, will be required. In their accomplishment, the glory of God and the honor of His great Name will be directly advanced; but it will be with no *immediate* result of calculable return. There is no man or woman here of whom it can be said, "It is *your* duty, rather than another's to do this thing. You are bound to contribute so much." *All* are bound, by an obligation binding upon *all*, and upon each, only as it is so upon all.

To the first work, the release of this church from debt, the honor of God (reverently so to speak) obliges you. It is involved in the just payment of what is justly owed. It is tarnished before men by the present state of things. Honesty in the man, is doubly bounden on the Christian. Honesty in the individual, is still more obligatory on the congregation associated for purposes of worship, in the Name of Him who is just, and true and holy.

In the accomplishment of both undertakings — the release of this church from debt, and the erection of another, so much wanted, — the interest of our communion is involved. That interest *requires success*, not merely for the Church's reputation in men's account — that is comparatively a light thing, although not *so* light as to deserve to be despised — but for its character

as a body owning, carrying out, guided, ruled, animated by, the Gospel of truth and love; for its fitness to be the receptacle of souls seeking escape from sin; for its correspondence with its profession to be the messenger and servant of Him who cannot away with iniquity, nor suffer wrong, or fraud, or guile.

Success is requisite in these works, for the encouragement and countenance of our own members, in a day of distrust and anxiety and painful foreboding. Every display of energy at this time is doubly valuable. Coldness and inefficiency, be their cause what it may, assume a worse and more dangerous aspect in proportion to the discouragements that are pressing on from other quarters. It is a time for *work*, for *hard* work, for *faithful* work, for giving proof of principle, if we have it in us.

Incitement to yourselves and others to begin and go on with good deeds of this kind, is another end to be attained by prosecuting to full completion what we have in hand. Thirty years this city, this great, wealthy, rapidly growing city, has done almost nothing in the way of extension of the Church. In comparison with our brethren of other cities, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, put us utterly to the blush. It is a debt you owe your brethren, to be forward in this work. Example is itself a duty and an opportunity of usefulness; and for example in this matter there are thousands who at this time look to you.

We are commanded to "provoke one another to love and to do good works," and therefore I will say, that no

part of this diocese is, in proportion to its means, so backward in exertions and sacrifices for the maintenance and extension of religious truth as this city; and that the common opinion is, that none in the city more stand in need of provocation to devise liberal things and show their profit in the faith which they profess, than the wealthy and influential body now before me.

I know the way of escape from these considerations to which many will almost involuntarily resort. "This is very well for him to hold! It is his professional view of the matter! He talks so as a thing of course, because it is his duty!"

Yes, brethren! It *is* my duty! a duty I owe to my God and to your God, and a duty owed, because it is *your duty* to which I am urging — a duty too much unrecognized, a duty of which too many are willingly ignorant, a duty of which, as a community, we are scandalously negligent — the duty of *rendering to* God *the things that are* God's, *of serving Him* in preference to Mammon. He claims, I dare not say, as the world teaches us, with paltering tongue, a *portion* of *your* goods; but, the disposal of *His own* goods, of which He has made you stewards that He may try your faithfulness and fitness for better trusts elsewhere. "He that is faithful in least," says our Saviour, of this very subject, "is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" It is to God that He requires

you to be faithful. You are to be faithful to Him in the use you make of your worldly wealth. Will He accept an account of splendid houses, of costly furniture, of plate and ornaments of virtu, of expensive feasts and luxurious living, as proof of your faithfulness in stewardship? Do you expect to fulfil your Lord's injunction, and "make friends of the unrighteous mammon, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations," by such expenditures? Be assured, that he who is encouraging such delusion, and whispering, "Is it not your right? May you not do as you will with your own? What harm in decent show and innocent gaity? What is money worth, if not to get them"—he, the father of lies, and god of this present world, is feeding you with ashes. He, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, directs to "sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves with bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." His direction comes back to the doctrine I started by maintaining,—it is the *heart's* engrossment that is idolatry; and therefore is covetousness, the love of money, trust in money, greediness of gain, and hard reluctance to part with wealth, so often in the Bible expressly called *idolatry*. The man on whom it has flung its icy chains is turned aside by his deceived heart, that he cannot deliver his soul from the delusion of the destroyer, nor say to the god of this world, whose

prisoner he is, "Is there not a lie in my right hand? shall I make gold my hope, or the fine gold my confidence?"

What, my brethren, can shield men who have it in their power to give to an object which they know and admit to be good in itself, right and fit at any time, peculiarly so now, and especially so *for them* — an object which has the glory of the great Name of God exclusively in view, and the advancement of His praise upon earth — an object which tends to the accomplishment of the ends for which the Son of God became man and died — what can shield those who love wealth too well to use it in such a work, from the pressure of the teaching of the Saviour, and the denunciation of the prophet?

Do they deny the authority of Him who speaks? No: I cannot believe of you, that the god of this world has gotten power among us to the extent of persuading to a denial of the Lord who bought you. You will not resist Him. You will not refuse Him. But you can *evade* His demands and warnings! The world, and the flesh, and spurious religion, will lend specious sophistry to do it. "He never meant to exact of you such sacrifices as He enjoined on those to whom His language was first addressed."

My brethren! once and again you have been warned from this place to take heed lest that imagination delude you into a contented relinquishment of the life and immortality which He revealed to those whom that revelation encouraged "to leave all and follow Him!" The

doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, that God is to be trusted implicitly *for all*, when the sacrifice of any thing is required that His kingdom may be sought, is *universal* in its application and direction. It is for all times and persons. To every one who believes His right to command and promise, the Son of God has addressed His precept and its condition, "*Seek ye first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." You know the context of that precept, the touching and impressive lesson drawn from the clothing of the lilies and the feeding of the birds, and how that lesson points and interprets the injunction to *seek first* God's kingdom. It is to the man who is afraid of growing poor that the Saviour speaks: — to the man whose heart *shrinks from venturing* to give, to the man in whose inward ear the great deluder whispers that "he *need* not give; he *ought* not; there is *no claim* upon him; it is *too much;* it *would be inconvenient;* why *should he more* than others? *who else* would do as much?" and such like lies to fill his right hand and turn aside his deceived heart.

How is God's kingdom sought?

A spurious religion has learned of the three enemies to man's salvation to say (or if it dare not *say* it, at least to fancy, and in its heart of hearts lay up the *fancy* as a ruling principle) that it is *by wishing for* it; by *believing in its existence;* by *owning* its desirableness, its excellence, its loveliness; by *professing* with the lips *to want* it; by asking for it in babbling prayers, perhaps, or with barren

sighs and tears; and all the while living, in the practical realities of life, as if there were no such thing! seeking just what the Gentiles seek, enjoying what they enjoy, claiming what they claim, and, within the bounds of *human* righteousness and social virtue, living as they live. Did CHRIST thus seek His Father's kingdom? Did any of His apostles so understand His precept? Did the first believers, who gave up all that they might have all things in common, so understand it? *They* made it a reality. To *seek* GOD's kingdom, with them, meant to *give up something* for it; to *test* one's love of it, and desire for it, and estimation of it, for one's self, and to *prove* it unto others, by tendering in exchange what might have been had and kept, but for the need of *so* seeking possessions and advancement elsewhere.

On another point, our SAVIOUR argues, What do the publicans less than that? And of the practice of modern Christendom, eating and drinking and living in mirth and fulness, getting and spending, using and laying up, in utter unconsciousness that it can be needful to turn more than one in the hundred to any account beyond this present life — we may well take up the SAVIOUR'S parable, and ask, What do ye more than a righteous heathen? Ye kill not, defraud not, are temperate and chaste, and serve your generation in good deeds. So does he. And he does it, too, to serve his GOD, though to him an unknown GOD. Is that all that is demanded of the children of the kingdom? Are they to get gain and spend it; to use the goods of this world and en-

joy them; as those who know of none, and *are called* to none, beyond it?

"But this," says one, "is putting heaven on sale! It is making a man the worker of his own salvation!"

That is utterly untrue. The imputation against such teaching, of exalting human merit, and depreciating the Saviour's work, is an empty calumny.

The word of God, indeed, talks of "working out our own salvation," and tells us to do it, "with fear and trembling;" but not as if any thing we can *do* or *give* can purchase that which is utterly, immeasurably, unspeakably beyond all price and our utmost efforts. Because we *are* saved, we must "*seek*" our priceless blessing. But it *must* be sought! and in giving all we have to seek it, if occasion be, *we* are put on *trial*, not heaven put on *sale!* Was heaven bartered for Isaac, when God tempted Abraham? When the patriarch's faith was counted to him for righteousness in that he counted not his own son, the son of his old age, the seed of promise, dear unto him, but freely gave him up at the asking of the Lord, trusting to God for the recompense and fulfilment of the promise, we received an example of the righteousness by faith by which we are to obtain salvation, if we are saved at all. How is your faith to be proved and tested, if not by testing your willingness to give up to God, your ability to trust in God? It is in what you love, in what you need, in what your hearts are prone to cling to, that that willingness and ability are to be put to test. When in the way of God's ordi-

nary providence, by those to whom He has given the right and duty to advise, direct and lead you in things spiritual, an appeal is made to you to give of that you have for carrying out the Divine provisions for the redemption of mankind, for supporting and extending the Church which is the visible Body of your LORD, for advancing and exalting the honor of GOD'S great Name — then is your time to examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; to prove your own selves, whether *your heart be with Him* who hath called you, and spared not His only SON for your redemption, and with Him given you all things needful for time and for eternity, or with the treasure which the arch-deceiver would fain persuade you to make your god. Take not his lie in your right hand! Say not, Deliver me, to that which he would have you worship! Let it not be written of you in the record to be produced at the last day,

HE FEEDETH ON ASHES!

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